

III. *An Account of the Lumen Boreale, as seen at several Times. By the Rev. Dr. Langwith, Rector of Petworth in Suffex, Communicated in a Letter to the Same.*

S I R,

I AM very glad to find that the Accounts of the last *Meteor* are of so near an Agreement; for I perceive there is little difference but what may be owing to the time and place of Observation. We have had the same sort of Lights here several times since my last; particularly,

Jan. 4. A Luminous Arch which extended it self from N. E. to West. The Streams all mov'd Westward. Wind N. W. *Merc.* 29 $\frac{1}{2}$.

Jan. 5. We had something of the same Nature, but hardly enough for Observation; and yet, this very Night the Appearances were more remarkable in some parts of the Kingdom than those of *October* the eighth. This I was inform'd of by a Person of Quality in *Lancashire*, who was pleas'd also to send me the enclos'd Description and Draught, communicated to him by a curious Observer at *Liverpool*.

March 2d. Between 7 and 8, there was an Arch upon a black Basis as before, extending it self from N. E. to W. It's height variable, Pyramidal Streams of Greenish Light moving Westward. About a quarter past 8, there shot up from the West a Stream of pale Flame-colour about 6 or 7 Degrees broad: It pass'd over the *Pleiades*, and crossing the *Meridian* a-

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bout 19 Degrees to the North of our *Zenith*, descended as low as the Tail of *Ursa Major* which it left a little to the South. It continu'd thus for some Minutes and then gradually vanish'd. Wind North, *Merc.* about 30.

March 3d. The Appearances this Night were so extraordinary, that they wou'd require a long description: But I shall chiefly take Notice of such particulars as differ'd from those of *October 8.*

1st That instead of one *Luminous Arch* in the North, here were *two* and sometimes *three* one above another. They were distinct enough from each other in their upper parts, but blended together towards the *Horizon*, which they *generally* cut about *N. E.* and *N. W.* but sometimes varied considerably from these Points.

The same Observation may be apply'd to the *heights*, for they were also variable; and in particular, the inner edge of the lowermost Arch was at sometimes about 6 Degrees above the *Horizon*, at others, considerably more or less.

I suppose this extraordinary Appearance was owing to several distinct Collections of Luminous Vapours, which were either at different heights from the Earth, or different distances from the Eye.

2^{dly}, Several of the more permanent Streams were bent, at times, into irregular Arches of different Curvatures and Positions.

Some of them held pretty near the same shape till they vanish'd, others went off most commonly in *Tangents* to some part of the former Curves.

3^{dly}, The Flashing Streams from the *East* sometimes met with those from the *West*, and so form'd continu'd Arches, of a pale colour, which quickly broke and vanish'd. No colouring follow'd upon the mixture of these Streams.

4^{thly},

4thly, The Streams of this kind mov'd mostly *Southward*, but not to any certain Point; for they were inclin'd to the *Horizon* at all Degrees between 5, or less, and 90. There was sometimes such a strange irregularity in their Motions as can hardly be describ'd; for the Places from whence the Flashings were directed seem'd to vary every Moment.

As to the more steady *Pyramidal* Streams, they generally mov'd *Westward*; and tho' some of them, at times, seem'd to stand still, or even move backward; yet I am apt to believe, this irregularity was only Apparent.

5thly, A little after the beginning of this *Meteor* there was a faint ruddiness in the Sky towards *N. E.* and *N. W.*; but when it was in its greatest perfection, towards 12 o' Clock, I saw none of the *Prismatick* Colours, tho' the Air was then full as light as I have ever known it upon these Occasions. This helps to confirm me in the Opinion that the *Prismatick* Colours in these Meteors were owing to the Sun.

These Appearances began early in the Evening, and held, as I am inform'd, for a good part of the Night. Wind *N. Westerly*, Merc. above 30.

I am told that these Meteors are much more common in the *North* of *England* than here, and that they go by the Name of *Streamers*, *Merry Dancers* or *Petty Dancers*. They also pretend to foretel the Weather by them, and say, that when the Streamers are green, they betoken Wet Stormy Weather; but when they are yellow, it will be Clear and Dry.

P. S. I don't know whether it is worth while to acquaint you, that *Aristotle* has given an *imperfect* Account of *some* of these *Meteors*.

I am, &c.

Petworth,
March 6, 1726-7.

B. Langwith.
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